Winter Forecast?

Description

Several newspapers have reported today that the Met Office is predicting a mild winter. As was widely reported earlier in the year, ?following public research, the Met Office no longer issues long-range forecasts for the general public, instead providing a monthly outlook on our website.

Despite this, the Daily Express has published a story 'Winter to be mild predicts Met Office' and the Daily Telegraph has reported 'Met Office data suggests mild winter'. These media reports have based their interpretation for the coming winter on a single probability map on our website. However they have been selective about the information they have used and you should not take these interpretations as a guide to the coming winter. Instead we would recommend using our monthly outlook and short range forecasts.

The forecasts on our website are provided to support international collaborators in seasonal forecasting. They require expert interpretation and the need to be combined with a range of other information before you can make a seasonal forecast.

Date Created
October 2010

Met Office in the Media: 27 Oct 2010

Description

Over recent days there has been a great deal of coverage regarding the chilly conditions across parts of Britain. The Daily Telegraph, reports that ??Frozen Britain braves coldest October night for 17 years . Many parts of northern Britain had a very cold night overnight Sunday into Monday with ?Levens Hall, Cumbria, seeing an overnight low of -6.6C, the coldest for 17 years. Other cold places included Trawsgoed in Wales and West Freugh in Scotland. The cold snap has been relatively short lived as winds have now turned more west or southwesterly again bringing milder conditions across the UK.

The Sunday Times has reported on NASA GISS data showing that Oct 2009 to September 2010 was the warmest 12 month period on record since records began. The article also reported that data from the Met Office, where we compile global temperature data in a different way, would confirm that the same period would “probably the first or second hottest on record”.

Date Created
October 2010

Walkers crisps work with Met Office for latest promotion

Description

Guess where it will rain & win £10 © Walkers.

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Guess where it will rain & win
£10 © Walkers.

Walkers crisps are launching a new promotion at the moment highlighting the importance of the British weather for their potatoes. The promotion allows the public, having got a voucher code from a packet of Walkers crisps, to log on to the website and have a go at guessing where across the UK or Ireland it might rain during certain three hour periods. If you are right then you win £10 or €10.

We are using our expertise to support Walkers by providing rainfall data to validate competition entries. Walkers have decided that if it has rained 1 mm or more in your chosen grid, you will win. To reach 1 mm or more of rain, you are looking for continuous rain for three hours that you can readily feel on your face and will make the ground wet, or a slight shower that lasts for 30 minutes and causes puddles to form. It is worth remembering that a steady drizzle of three hours may not actually give 1 mm.

Walkers use home-grown potatoes to produce their crisps and weather forecasts are essential to food production. As the UK's official weather service the Met Office plays a vital role in helping UK agriculture.

The Met Office will use the UK weather radar network, which is used to measure how much rain is falling at a given time. This records the rainfall over the Walkers map of the UK and Republic of Ireland every five minutes within each three-hour timeslot available. In order to confirm 1 mm or more of rainfall has fallen over your chosen grid-spot during your selected three-hour timeslot, several radar accumulation points are averaged together across your chosen 4 km^2 area. Radar observations provide the best way of observing rainfall across the whole of the UK. Radar makes an estimate of rainfall over an area that is then processed to give a total over 4 km^2 areas. Although the radar is very good it can not be 100% accurate.

Forecasting for the UK is very difficult as it has very changeable and varied weather. This is a daily

challenge which Met Office forecasters rise to, making them amongst the best in the world. No weather forecast can ever be 100% accurate, especially when forecasting rain to 4 km^2, but the Met Office provides the best advice possible. Using the forecasts on our website can increase the chance of you picking the right rainfall spot.

The competition runs until the middle of next month and you can find out more about how we are helping on the Met Office website

Date Created
October 2010

Met Office in the media: 14 October 2010

Description

The Daily Mail has reported that we are planning to make changes to our team of weather presenters at the BBC. The Met Office is pleased to have secured the BBC contract to deliver weather services across TV, radio, on line and mobile channels. Our new contract with the BBC requires us to deliver continued high standards of accuracy and consistency within revised affordability levels. To achieve this we have employed a fair and open process to change Met Office staff roles and structure within the BBC weather centre. The story has also been covered in the Independent and the Telegraph has written a comment article.

Elsewhere, the BBC has reported on a project to use ship logs as a source of climate information. ?Visitors to the website OldWeather.org, which launched earlier this week are being invited to input weather observations of the routes taken by any of 280 Royal Navy ships. Once on the website, volunteers will be asked to transcribe information from the digital copies of historical logbooks, making notes of weather and any interesting events.

Bloomberg and others have reported on a weather forecast application being launched with Windows Phone 7. The Met Office has been working with TBS Enterprise Mobility.Your Weather, on the Windows Phone 7 platform complements the range of multimedia services offered by the Met Office. Its mobile website and applications are supported by a traditional
website providing news and warnings via RSS newsfeeds. Users can also view news videos on a YouTube channel and receive forecasts through widgets on Vista, Firefox and iGoogle.

Date Created
October 2010

Weather presenters

Description

?????It has been reported today in the media that we will be making changes to our team of weather presenters at the BBC. Earlier this year the Met Office secured the BBC contract to deliver weather services across TV, radio, on-line and mobile channels. Our new contract with the BBC requires us to deliver continued high standards of accuracy and consistency within revised affordability levels. To achieve this we have employed a fair and open process to change Met Office staff roles and structure within the BBC weather centre.

Met Office Staff at the BBC weather centre have a range of skills, including key skills in meteorology, with most being fully trained weather forecasters and following a fair and open interview process staff have been placed into broadcasting or management roles that best fit their individual skills and strengths.

Crucially, the continuing partnership between the BBC and Met Office in the provision of weather forecasting services, will enable us to deliver authoritative, reliable, accurate and innovative forecasts on which BBC audiences rely.

Date Created
October 2010

Charting past climate with the help of ships logs

Description

Voyages of World War One Royal Navy warships are being used to help scientists understand the climate of the past and unearth new historical information, with help from the public.

Visitors to the website OldWeather.org, which launches today, are being invited to input weather observations of the routes taken by any of 280 Royal Navy ships. Once on the website, volunteers will be asked to transcribe information from the digital copies of historical logbooks, making notes of weather and any interesting events.

Dr Peter Stott, Head of Climate Monitoring and Attribution at the Met Office, said: “Historical weather data is vital because it allows us to test our models of the Earth’s climate: if we can correctly account for what the weather was doing in the past, then we can have more confidence in our predictions of the future. Unfortunately, the historical record is full of gaps, particularly from before 1920, and at sea, so this project is invaluable.”

Sailors have been deeply concerned with the weather since ancient times: wind speed and direction, and estimates of ocean currents, were critical information for keeping track of the ship’s position. The Royal Navy records in the National Archives and the National Maritime Museum go back into the 17th century, and even the earliest logbooks contain descriptions of the weather of each day.

Dr Chris Lintott of Oxford University, one of the team behind the OldWeather.org project added: “These naval logbooks contain an amazing treasure trove of information, but because the entries are handwritten they are incredibly difficult for a computer to read. By getting an army of online human volunteers to retrace these voyages and transcribe the information recorded by British sailors we can relive both the climate of the past and key moments in naval history.”

OldWeather.org forms a key part of the International ACRE Project, which is recovering past weather and climate data from around the world and bringing them into widespread use. Met Office Hadley Centre scientist Dr Rob Allan, the ACRE project leader said: “Reconstructing past weather from these historical documents will help further our knowledge of weather patterns and climatic changes.”

Most of the data about past climate comes from land-based weather monitoring stations which have been systematically recording data for over 150 years. The weather information from the ships at OldWeather.org, which spans the period 1905–1929, effectively extends this land-based network to 280 seaborne weather stations traversing the world’s oceans.

Related Articles

- WWI ships to chart past climate (bbc.co.uk)
- Climate researchers to study WW1 warship voyages (theglobeandmail.com)
- You: Google may aid global climate project (guardian.co.uk)

- Citizen Science: Trawl WWI Navy Records for Weather Data (wired.com)

Date Created
October 2010

Last weekend’s weather

Description

Sunday’s forecast was pretty much spot on with the low cloud clearing as expected giving most areas a glorious boost to the weekend with the temperature reaching 21C in many places.

However, it is fair to say that our forecast for Saturday was too optimistic in places with more cloud than forecast.

Indeed the air was a little more moist than expected and this meant the low cloud was slightly thicker and the October sun was not strong enough to burn the cloud away in central and eastern areas. This, combined with a fresh southeasterly wind, made it ‘feel’ quite chilly, especially along North Sea coasts and through the Thames Estuary.

However, in most places it was relatively warm for the time of year and where the sun did break through, in some sheltered parts of the south and west, the temperature reached 22C.

Date Created
October 2010

Hurricane expert interviewed on Twitter

Description

On Wednesday 13 October we will be talking to one of our tropical storm experts, Dr. Jyotika Virmani, about what tropical storms are and how we forecast them. The interview will take place on our Twitter feed at 16:30 (UK time), using the hastag #metqt, and should take between 30-45 minutes.

The 2010 Atlantic Hurricane season has been above average, in terms of storms, and we have had 15 named storms – eight have become hurricanes.

Dr. Virmani currently works at the Met Office as a Senior Scientist – her area of speciality is Ocean-Atmosphere Interactions.

Before joining the Met Office she was an Executive of the Florida Coastal Ocean Observing System Consortium.

She has previously worked as a research scientist at the GEC-Marconi Research Centre in Chelmsford and a Post-Doctoral Research Associate, at the College of Marine Science, University of South Florida, conducting research on hurricanes, climate, and ocean circulation.

To see the full interview you will need to follow http://www.twitter.com/metoffice (@metoffice) and http://www.twitter.com/metofficestorms (@metofficestorms)

Date Created
October 2010

Met Office in the Media: 05 October 2010

Description

Scottish media have widely welcomed the joint Met Office/SEPA flood forecasting service for Scotland Following the announcement of funding by the Scottish Government in an attempt to protect lives and homes from devastating water damage. The Scotsman reported how the service would join up weather forecasting expertise of the Met Office, with the flood forecasting expertise of SEPA. BBC Scotland reported that 'It is a partnership with a real purpose, to help people.' The Aberdeen Press and Journal reported how the scheme scheme would "enhance flood resilience" and ensure Scotland had the "best advice possible", whilst The Herald reported on how the partnership should provide the emergency services with earlier and better flood risk warnings.

As the United Nations climate change talks in Tianjin get underway in China this week, The Guardian has run a commentary piece about how governments must use the UN climate change talks to set a realistic limit on global temperature rise. Within the article the authors, Nicola Ranger and Alex Bowen from the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at London School of Economics and Political Science, use joint climate change research from the Met Office Hadley Centre to show the challenges faced on meeting targets of 1.5 C and even 2.0 C warming.

Following yesterdays announcement by Positive Weather Solutions that there is the chance another cold winter, the Met Office has been asked for its views on the forecast. The First Post , the Western Morning News and the Exeter Express and Echo have all reported on the story.

Date Created
October 2010

A cold winter forecast?

Description

There have been a number of stories in the media today (see the bottom of this post for a selection) reporting on the chance that we may be in for another cold weather across the UK. There has also been some confusion as to the source of this forecast elsewhere, with some suggesting that the forecast has been issued by the Met Office. This is not the case. The forecast was issued by another weather forecasting organisation called Positive Weather Solutions.

The Met Office no longer issues public long-range forecasts because in our customer research the public have told us they would prefer a monthly outlook. Although the limitations in science mean monthly forecasts are themselves a developing area of forecasting and will therefore be less precise than our short-term forecasts, the public have told us that a monthly outlook would be of use to them. These weather forecasts are available on our website.

Of course, by their nature, forecasts become less accurate the further out you look. Although we can identify general patterns of weather, the science does not exist to allow an exact forecast beyond five days, or to absolutely promise a certain type of weather. As a result, ‘seasonal forecasts’ cannot be as precise as short-term forecasts. This is especially true in the UK, one of the hardest places to provide forecasts for because of our size and location.

Related Articles

- Britain ‘in for another big freeze winter’ (telegraph.co.uk)
- Here we snow again (mirror.co.uk)
- Weathermen square up after cold winter forecast (The First Post)

Date Created
October 2010

Met Office role in Scottish Flood Forecasting Service

Description

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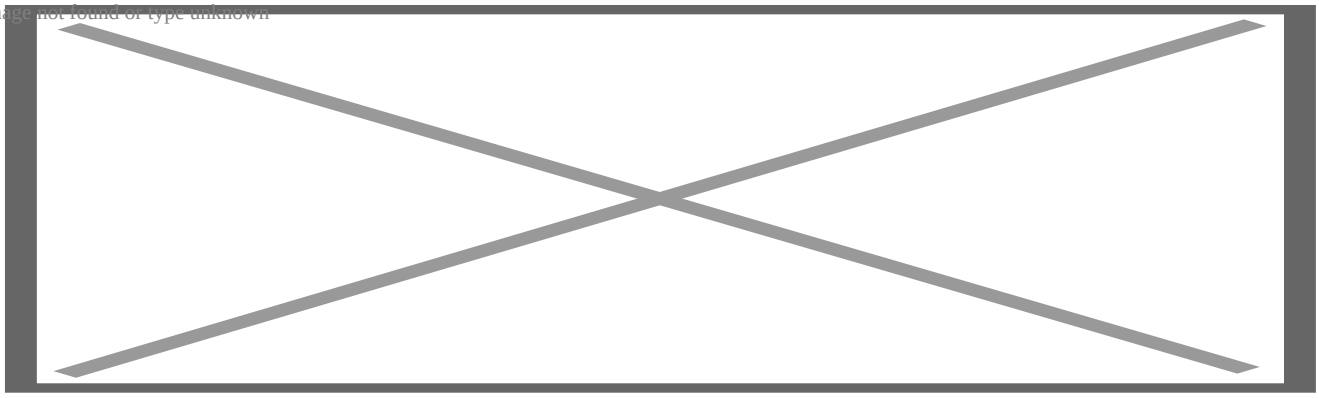

Emergency responders — and ultimately vulnerable communities and businesses — across Scotland can look forward to better flood forecasting thanks to the development of the Scottish Flood Forecasting Service.

The Scottish Government have announced funding of £750,000 to improve flood forecasting services in Scotland, through a partnership between the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Met Office.

Phil Evans, Director of Government Services at the Met Office said: “This partnership between SEPA and the Met Office, supported by the Scottish Government, will enhance flood resilience in Scotland. The Met Office and our weather forecasting team at Aberdeen are delighted to be supporting this new service.”

The Met Office plays a crucial role in providing advice across a range of natural hazards, including forecasts for volcanic ash, radioactive emergencies, tidal surges, pollution incidents and airborne spread of diseases, such as bluetongue. The Scottish Flood Forecasting Service is another example of our value in providing early warnings across a range of hazards.

Phil Evans continued: “The Scottish Government’s investment in the Scottish Flood Forecasting Service, will allow SEPA’s expertise in flood warnings and advice to be brought together with the Met Office’s experience in weather and other environmental hazards to ensure Scotland has the best advice possible

Date Created
October 2010

Met Office in the Media: 01 October 2010

Description

Many outlets have been reporting on the very wet and windy weather affecting the Ryder Cup, with Paul Kelso from the Daily Telegraph reports on how 'the Met Office's dire forecast for the opening day of the match was spot on'.

David Rosser from the Western Mail reports on how 'Firms must prepare for the real risks of climate change' commenting on how the UK is fortunate enough to have a relatively strong understanding of what changes to the UK climate will mean over the next century, thanks to the work of the Met Office Hadley Centre and the UK Climate Impacts Programme.

Date Created
October 2010

Ryder Cup and Autumn Gales

Description

As the Ryder Cup gets underway in the very wet and windy conditions forecast by our weather experts, our Chief Meteorologist, Ewen McCallum looks at why wind and rain is so common at this time of year.

> “Autumn is well known for its gales as wet and windy weather often strips the colourful leaves from the trees. Less welcome of course are falling branches, or even fallen trees themselves which can severely affect our complex transport network.
>
> With the first real windy period of the year upon us, and just as the Ryder Cup gets underway in rather wet and windy conditions, it might be worth pondering on the question as to ‘why?’ it seems to happen at this time of year.
>
> The simple answer is because of the temperature contrast over our half of the globe. The deep areas of low pressure that you see on a weather map are caused by the differences in temperature between the cold pole to the north of the UK and the hot equator to the south. It is nature’s desire to even out these temperature differences that causes these vigorous systems to form and results in a lot of wind and rain. In the Autumn this temperature difference is at a maximum, as the poles are cooling down rapidly with the onset of winter, while the tropics are at their warmest with tropical storms very frequent at this time of year. So because of this large temperature contrast in the Autumn wind storms are more frequent.

We are providing weather forecasts for the Ryder Cup on our website, along with other events throughout October on our events pages.

Also in the news:

Ryder Cup 2010: Welsh tourist board not singing in the rain (Daily Telegraph)

Ryder Cup 2010: USA team uniforms retain too much water – like course (The Guardian)

Date Created
October 2010